

COLUMBIAN HISTORIAN.

"Enlightened minds and virtuous manners lead to the gates of glory."

VOL. I. NEW RICHMOND, JULY 2, 1824. NO. 3.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY A. C., J. & W. HERRON, AT \$1 50
CTS. PER ANNUM, PAYABLE HALF-YEARLY IN ADVANCE.

as a hymn of thanksgiving to God; and were joined by those of the other ships, with tears of joy and transports of congratulation. This office of gratitude to Heaven was followed by an act of justice to their commander. They threw themselves at the feet of Columbus, with feelings of self-condemnation mingled with reverence. They implored him to pardon their ignorance, and insolence, which had created him so much unnecessary disquiet, and had so often obstructed the prosecution of his well-concerted plan; and passing, in the warmth of their admiration, from one extreme to another, they now pronounced the man whom they had so lately reviled, and threatened, to be a person inspired by Heaven, with sagacity and fortitude more than human, in order to accomplish a design so far beyond the ideas and conception of all former ages.

As soon as the sun arose, all their boats were manned and armed. They rowed towards the island with their colours displayed with warlike musick, and other martial pomp. As they approached the coast, they saw it covered with a multitude of people, whom the novelty of the spectacle had drawn together, whose attitudes and gesture expressed wonder & astonishment, at the strange objects which presented themselves to their view. Columbus was the first European who set foot in the New World, which he had discovered. He landed in a rich

dress, and with a naked sword in his hand. His men followed; and kneeling down, they all kissed the ground which they had so long desired to see. They next erected a crucifix; and, prostrating themselves before it, returned thanks to God for conducting their voyage to such an happy issue.

The natives considered the Spaniards as divinities, and the discharge of the artillery as their thunder: they fell prostrate at the sound.

Setting sail from the island where he first landed, which, in commemoration of the asylum it afforded him, he had named St Salvador, he proceeded on his voyage of discovery in a southerly direction till his arrival at Hispaniola. With that place he was, for sundry reasons, much delighted, especially on account of the evidences it exhibited of its being a country abounding in the precious metals. On the present, as on every subsequent occasion, he treated the natives with such justice and kindness, as to be regarded by them with sentiments of esteem and gratitude, veneration and love.

Returning to Spain with a quantity of gold, which might serve as a proof that his voyage had been successful, he entered the port of Palos on the 15th of March, 1493, seven months and eleven days from the time he had left it. On this occasion the people at large testified, by demonstrations that were wild and ex-

travagant, their gratitude and joy on account of the safe return of their countrymen. Columbus repaired immediately to court, where he was received with the utmost respect and honour. His stipulated privileges were all confirmed to him, his family was ennobled, and a fresh armament of seventeen ships and fifteen hundred followers were placed at his disposal for another adventure. With this command he sailed from Cadiz on his second voyage, on the 25th of September, 1493.

Returning to Hispaniola, he had the misfortune to find that a small party of men which he had left there had been cut off by the natives. Although he wisely forebore to punish this aggression, he determined on the adoption of proper measures to prevent a repetition of it. Pursuant to this he erected a small town and fortress, which he denominated Isabella, in honour of his royal patroness of Castile.

Having previously established his brother Diego as governor of his settlement in Hispaniola, Columbus, in gratification of his ruling passion, sailed in quest of further discoveries. The principal result of this voyage was the addition of Jamaica to the territories of Spain. Returning thence to the town of Isabella, which he now regarded as the capital of his possessions, he had the good fortune to find there his brother Bartholomew, who had brought along with him a large and opportune supply of provisions and men.

The natives of Hispaniola having become jealous of the Spaniards, from believing them to be actuated by evil motives, resolved to drive them out of the island. With a view to this, an army of

one hundred thousand men was brought into the field. This immense body Columbus attacked and overthrew in an open plain, having under his command but two hundred foot, twenty horse, and twenty wolf dogs. This victory secured to the Spaniards an undisputed possession of the island, the Indians making no further attempts to dislodge them.

Moved by envy at his high fortunes, the enemies of Columbus at home had become active in their endeavours to sully his reputation and destroy his interest. The more certainly to confound them, by meeting their false accusations in person, he sailed for Europe in 1496, leaving his brother Bartholomew in the government of Hispaniola. On his arrival in Spain he not only succeeded in putting his accusars to silence, but completely overwhelmed them with mortification and shame, by procuring through his influence at court, whatever additional forces and supplies he thought proper to ask.

In the year 1497 he sailed on his third voyage, in the course of which he discovered the island of Trinidad and the continent of South America, and arrived at Hispaniola in 1498. It was not long afterwards when both he and his brothers were assailed in Spain by fresh accusations.

On this occasion the monarch whom he had so faithfully and ably served, forgetful alike of gratitude and justice, dispatched to the newly established colony Francis de Bovadilla, a corrupt judge, with instructions to enquire into the charges, and, should they be found true, to order Columbus home, and remain himself as governor in his stead.

The interest of Bovadilla being thus made to co-operate with his hatred of Columbus, the condemnation of the accused was unceremonious and prompt. The admiral was accordingly apprehended by order of the new governor, treated with marks of studied indignity, and hurried in irons on board of a ship, to be transported to Spain.

The commander of the vessel was a man of a generous mind & a feeling heart. No sooner had he put to sea, where the arm of Bovadilla could no longer reach him, than, softened by such a reverse in the fortunes of his prisoner, and touched with veneration for his virtues & years, he offered with his own hand to release him from his chains. But Columbus refused; declaring, that he would accept his liberty, of which he had been so unworthily and wrongfully deprived, from nothing but his Sovereign's especial command. "If," said he, "twelve years of hardship and fatigue—if continual dangers and frequent famine—if the ocean first opened, and many times passed and re-passed, to add to the Spanish monarchy a new world abounding in wealth—and if an infirm and premature old age, brought on by those services, deserve these chains as a reward, it is fit I should wear them to Spain, and keep them by me as a suitable memorial to the end of my life." He continued afterwards to carry these fetters with him where ever he went—they hung in his chamber, and he ordered them to be laid with his body in the grave. No sooner had he arrived in Spain, than, pursuant to a royal order, he was released from confinement, the king and queen manifested in their reception and treatment of him all their former kindness and

confidence, and Bovadilla was immediately discarded from favour.

In the year 1502, Columbus reinstated in his honours and authority visited a fourth time the island of Hispaniola. On his arrival off the port of Santo Domingo, where the governor resided, he found a fleet of eighteen ships, richly laden, ready to depart for the continent of Europe. Persuaded from the character of the weather and the appearance of the heavens, of which he had long been strictly observant, that a storm was approaching, he asked permission to enter the harbour with his own ship, and warned the fleet not to venture immediately to sea. His request and advice were both disregarded. The whole fleet sailed, and of the eighteen vessels, of which consisted, fifteen were lost in the tempest that ensued. Bovadilla, who was himself on board, went down with all the wealth he had accumulated; while one of the three ships that escaped was freighted with the remnant of the admiral's fortune. By the precautions he adopted and his skill in seamanship, he himself, in his own vessel, rode out the gale. In the spirit of superstition which characterized the times, this memorable issue of things attributed by some to the immediate interposition of Providence in behalf of Columbus, and by others to the employment of sorcery by himself.

In his next voyage of adventure the admiral sailed along the coast of Darien, in the hope of discovering a strait that might open a new passage to the countries of the East. Disappointed in this, he established, under the command of his brother, a small colony in the province of Veragua, and then sailed for Spain, with a view to

make arrangements for rendering it permanent.

Overtaken on his voyage by a violent tempest, in which some of his ships had the misfortune to run foul of each other, it was not without great difficulty that he reached in safety the island of Jamaica. Here, the felicitous pregnancy and readiness of his genius suggested to him the means of relieving himself and his followers from the calamity of famine.

Irritated by the wrongs they had sustained from the injustice of others, the natives refused to supply him with provisions. His sufferings on this account had arisen to an extremity which nature was unable much longer to survive. A total eclipse of the moon was at hand. His knowledge of astronomy had enabled him to calculate the hour of its commencement. Of this he took advantage to bend to his purpose the undisciplined natives.

Summoning to a convention the chiefs and principal personages of the island, he informed them that the God whom he served, and who had created all things in heaven and earth, moved to anger by their unjust refusal to support his servants, meditated against them a speedy and most afflictive judgment, of which they would shortly have tokens from above—for, that at a particular hour of a night which he designated, the moon would assume the appearance of blood, an emblem of the signal destruction which awaited them.

His predictions being verified in every particular, the savages, overwhelmed with terror, thronged around him with an abundance of provisions; and, falling prostrate at his feet, implored

him to avert the evils which menaced them. Being extricated, at length, from his difficulties by means of a fleet sent to his relief from the island of Hispaniola, he sailed from Jamaica, and, in the month of December 1504, anchored in the port of St Lucar in Spain.

But that country, for which he had achieved and suffered so much, afforded him no longer an asylum from fraud, or a comfortable home. Isabella his patroness, to whom alone he looked for redress, was dead, and with her were entombed his expectations and his hopes. It was in vain that he appealed to the king for justice. That narrow minded and ungrateful monarch, after having made him the sport of caprice and violated promises, insulted him by proposing a commutation of his claims for a very limited pension.

Disgusted by such meanness, penetrated with abhorrence of such baseness and perfidy, and exhausted by the fatigues and calamities he had endured, Columbus, having indignantly withdrawn himself from court, expired at Valladolid, on the 20th of May 1506, in the fifty-ninth year of his age. The dignified composure and serenity of mind, which threw over his last moments an unfading lustre, formed a suitable termination to a life of greatness. Ferdinand, covered with shame and stung by remorse for his treachery and injustice to this first and brightest ornament of his empire, bestowed on him distinguished funeral honours, and confirmed to his descendants their hereditary rights.

This illustrious man is buried in the cathedral of Seville, where a monument is erected to his

memory, on which is inscribed the following epitaph, "*Here lies Columbus, who gave to Castile and Leon a new world,*" the most exalted eulogy, yet perfectly just, that ever mortal has merited or received.

The character of Columbus presents an epitome wherein are united, in the happiest proportion & most correct adjustment, all the high and essential components of human greatness. It is scarcely possible to contemplate it without veneration & awe. To a lofty, comprehensive and well cultivated mind, he added a degree of patience and perseverance, an intrepidity of spirit, an ardour of feeling, and a vigour of action, equal to the accomplishment of the weightiest undertakings. His schemes, like his intellect, were modelled on a scale of gigantic grandeur. He was such a man as nature forms but once in centuries. In any age he would have stood conspicuous and been instrumental in giving a turn to human affairs—in his own, he was without a rival. With a capacity to project and compass the most novel and vast designs, he possessed also the rare and no less useful talent of devising the readiest means of execution, and superintending the minutest practical details. His power of concealing his passions and governing himself gave him a peculiar fitness for the government of others; while his quickness in perceiving the relations of things, the aptness of his genius, and his perfect self-possession, enabled him to turn to his account even sinister occurrences. No man, perhaps, ever possessed in a higher degree the important art of rendering others subservient to his purposes, or of adapting

his conduct to the nature of emergencies—commanding or conceding, temporizing with vigour, as circumstances required. It was by means of this art that he seemed to render every thing around him tributary to his designs, and to become himself a controuling principle, which man, the elements, and even casualties obeyed. It may be added, as a fact not altogether devoid of interest, that the hardihood of his person in the indurance of fatigue and exposure, hardships and famine gave the finishing touch to his fitness for adventure.

Columbus was of a lofty stature, a long visage, and a majestic aspect; his nose was aquiline, his eyes grey, and his complexion clear and somewhat ruddy. He was a man of wit and pleasantry, in his habits sociable, and in conversation elegant and refined. The comeliness of his mien, added to his condescension, affability and discretion conciliated the affections of those who were around him, while, by an air of grandeur and authority, he never failed to command respect. In his diet he was plain, in his drink temperate, and in his dress rich but not ostentatious. His whole appearance was so expressive of his character, that an entire stranger, on first seeing him, could never regard him but as a distinguished personage.

His moral qualities were also of the highest and most estimable order. Among these his piety and gratitude to heaven for favours received were always conspicuous. His magnanimity and benevolence, his disinterestedness and love of justice, were constantly extended to those within his sphere; his loyal at-

tachment and unshaken fidelity as a subject, formed a striking contrast with the ingratitude and neglect which it was his fortune to experience from the monarch whom he served; while his kind and generous treatment of the conquered savages deservedly procured for him the title of Father to that injured people.

Although this article might be eulogy in relation to others, it is strict biography as it respects Columbus.—*From a History of America.*



Life of AMERICUS VESPUTIUS from Delaplaine's Repository.

IT cannot be denied that Americus Vesputius (more correctly Amerigo Vespucci) was a man of talents and acquirements, industry and enterprize. For boldness of design and extent of achievement, he holds, perhaps, the second place among the adventurers of the fifteenth century who directed their attention to discoveries in the west. Notwithstanding this, he was many degrees inferior to him who so deservedly occupies the first: for, in summing up his character, we are compelled to acknowledge, that he was formed by accident, and distinguished by a concurrence of fortunate circumstances, rather than really great by nature. It were even well for the fairness and honesty of his reputation, had it been accident alone that gave him renown. But there is reason to apprehend that something more than accident and less than genius was operative on the occasion; and that he obtained by management, not to call it stratagem, that reward to which neither his merit nor

his services rightfully entitled him. An inordinate desire of fame appears to have constituted his ruling passion; and for the gratifications of this he was ready to encounter difficulty and toil, to dare boldly, and to suffer with fortitude. Nor, provided he could compass his end, was he very delicately scrupulous as to the means he employed. Hence arose, in his too eager pursuit of his favourite object, that perversion of dates and those other violations of correct narrative with which he is charged, as well as his more open adoption of several measures which are deemed inconsistent with justice and honour. Although his success in giving its name to the new world has effectually secured immortality to his own, it has served, at the same time, to extend and perpetuate the knowledge of his premeditated usurpation of the rights of another. For, to the illustrious discoverer who planned and executed the first adventure across the Atlantic, it was unquestionably due, that the country discovered should receive his name. This the subject of the present article had the address to prevent, and, instead of Columbia, America became the title of the western continent—an event that has never ceased to be lamented by the generous, while the just have condemned the motives in which it originated, as well as the means whereby it was accomplished. But more of this in the sequel.

AMERICUS VESPUTIUS, a Florentine by birth, was the descendant of an ancient and respectable family. He was born in the year 1451, four years after the birth of Columbus. Although intended by his father for the mercantile

profession, the education he received was solid and liberal. He was, in an especial manner, eminently versed in the sciences and arts subservient to navigation. In the character of a man of business, and carrying along with him habits of observation, he visited Spain and several other countries, adding thereby to his wealth, his acquaintance with cosmography, and his knowledge of mankind. It was but a short time previously that Columbus, covered with glory, had returned from his first voyage of discovery.

By royal permission, the merchants of Seville were equipping, under the command of Ojeda, a fleet of four ships on an enterprize to the west. Ambitious of visiting the new world, and desirous also, perhaps, of bettering his fortune, Vesputius engaged in this adventure in his professional capacity, and, according to his own account, sailed from Cadiz on the 20th of May 1497. On the 15th of October 1498, he returned to the same port, having, in the interim, discovered the coast of Paria, and penetrated as far as the Gulf of Mexico. If this statement be correct, he saw the continent before Columbus, who did not discover it till 1498. But, as will shortly appear, there exist strong grounds of belief that the date of Ojeda's first voyage was 1499.

During this adventure so rapidly did Vesputius improve in the science of navigation and the art of practical seamanship, as to acquire the reputation of an able captain. If his own narrative be entitled to credit, he commenced his second voyage, under the auspices of Ferdinand and Isabella, in which he commanded six ships,

on the 11th of May 1499. In the prosecution of it he proceeded first to the Antilles, thence to the coast of Guiana and Venezuela, and did not return to Cadiz until the month of November 1500. Wounded in his feelings by what he considered ingratitude in the Spanish monarch for the services he had rendered him, he now abandoned his employ and returned to Seville, where he lived for a time secluded from society.

Emanuel of Portugal, being jealous of the success and glory of Spain, was ambitious to become her rival in the career of adventure. He accordingly, on receiving information of the neglect and injustice which Vesputius had experienced, and his dissatisfaction on account of them, invited him to his court, and gave him the command of three ships for a third voyage to the new world. Flattered by such a mark of confidence and distinction, the adventurer prepared with alacrity for the enterprize. Sailing from Lisbon on the 10th of May 1501, he ran down the coast of Africa as far as Angola, and passing thence to Brazil in South America, pursued his discoveries in a southerly direction to the coast of Patagonia. Having penetrated thus far, he returned by the way of Sierra Leone and the coast of Guinea, and arrived at Lisbon on the 7th of September 1502.

Eminently gratified by the success of his enterprize, king Emanuel now equipped for him six ships, with which, on the 10th of May 1503, he sailed on his fourth and last voyage. The discovery of a western passage to the Molucca islands was the particular object of this adventure. Taking his departure from the coast

of Africa, he pursued, as formerly, a westerly course, and entered the bay of All Saints in Brazil. Having provisions on board for only twenty months, and being detained five months on the coast of Brazil by foul weather and contrary winds, it became necessary for him, without any further prosecution of his discoveries, to return to Portugal. He accordingly set sail, and anchored in the roads of Lisbon on the 14th of June 1504. Notwithstanding his failure in relation to the contemplated object of his voyage, he experienced a kind and favourable reception, on account of the quantities of Brazil wood and other articles of great value with which he was freighted.

From the termination of this voyage to the close of his life we know but little of the history of Vesputius, and even that is without interest. About the year 1507 he published an account of his four voyages; in the same year he again retired to Seville, and received from Ferdinand of Spain the appointment of Delineator of sea-charts, under the title of chief pilot of the kingdom. He died in the island of Tercera in 1515, in the sixty-third year of his age.

In all his voyages of Discovery Vesputius had, no doubt, in his view the melioration of his fortune by a acquisition of wealth; but his leading object appears to have been the gratification of his vanity by imposing his name on the new world, and establishing his claim to its first discovery. The former of these ends he had the industry and art to accomplish, by publishing the first chart of the continent and asserting in his narrative that he saw it as early as the year 1497.

His report respecting the date of his first voyage is not believed. His own word, which he had an interest in falsifying, is the only evidence that was ever adduced in favour of its truth; whereas the testimony against it is multifarious and weighty. Vesputius, already stated, asserts that his first voyage, in which he discovered the western continent, was performed in 1497; but all the Spanish historians declare, that it was not undertaken till the year 1499, while Columbus is universally acknowledged to have seen the continent in 1498. Ojeda himself, the commander of the first voyage in which Vesputius was engaged, appears to have deposed on oath, in the course of a judicial enquiry that he did not sail till 1499. Herrera, whose reputation for veracity is held unimpeachable, and who is understood to have compiled his general history of America from the most authentic records, prefers against Vesputius accusations that are still more serious and weighty. He positively asserts, that instead of *four* that adventurer made but *two* voyages to the new world—both of them with Ojeda; the first in 1499, and the second in 1501; and that his narrative of his other voyages is a fiction.

There exists still further ground for denying to Vesputius the honour of having discovered the western continent. He is not considered as the author of that achievement by either Martyr or Benzoni, two Italian writers, the former his own cotemporary, and both of them disposed to do him perfect justice. Yet Martyr records in his epistles every remarkable event of the time. Nor is this all. Fonesca, during whose administration, and from under